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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 002345

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [NATO](#) [IQ](#) [USEU](#) [BRUSSELS](#)

SUBJECT: BRUSSELS SCENE-SETTER FOR SECRETARY'S
PARTICIPATION IN IRAQ CONFERENCE

Classified By: Political MC Kyle Scott. Reason: 1.4(b)(d)

1. (C) Europe is still in turmoil as a result of the "no" votes in France and the Netherlands on the European constitution. As expected, European leaders have turned inward as they struggle to look responsive to public discontent with their leadership. The debates at their June 16-17 summit reflect how the constitution, future enlargement and the EU budget are all complicated by the need to deliver on existing EU commitments while maintaining adequate public support. Despite their internal disarray, we expect the EU to continue to press a common foreign agenda -- if for no other reason than to prove to their publics that the European project is still relevant. Our publicly-stated desire to continue working with them on our common agenda has been welcome, and that is the key message they also hope to convey at the US-EU summit that will be held the day before your arrival.

2. (C) In this regard, Europe's transformation on Iraq in particular is one we should welcome. We have moved beyond the disagreements of 2003 that divided the alliance and the Union. NATO's training mission is well underway, with all European allies contributing. NATO SYG Jaap De Hoop Scheffer will participate in the Iraq conference, and will have an opportunity during the session on rule of law and public order you are co-chairing to lay out NATO's views on next steps. Likewise, an EU "troika" composed of FM Asselborn, FM Straw, Javier Solana, and Benito Ferrero-Waldner just completed the first-ever high-level EU visit to Baghdad. EU training of over 800 judges, prosecutors, and senior police and prison officials ("EUJUST LEX") will kick off in July, the EU stands ready to support drafting a constitution, committed over 1.2 billion euros at the Madrid conference (with 320 million euros deployed thus far), helped prepare the January elections, agreed to substantial debt relief, and Ferrero-Waldner announced last week that the Commission intends to open a delegation office in Baghdad soon. Several EU member states have also offered bilateral programs.

3. (C) There is a growing consensus here that Europe has a stake in a successful outcome in Iraq, and is ready to help. But EU officials tell us privately that they are concerned that the Iraqi government has been too vague and scattered in its approach. They will be looking to the Iraqi delegation at the conference to clarify its priorities for the short- and medium-term. Anything we can do to help the large Iraqi delegation focus its requests would be welcome.

4. (C) While progress on Iraq has been notable, the cancellation of the proposed informal EU-NATO foreign ministers' dinner and EU reluctance to mention NATO in the final communiqu  underscores another, unfortunate, dynamic at play in Brussels. The Belgians clearly saw their initiative as an effort to climb out of the hole they dug with the April 2003 "chocolate summit." Following the President's and your visits in February, Europeans hailed a new spirit of partnership with the U.S. Many of them, however, are concerned by what they see as an American attempt to insert NATO into areas where the EU has long been the dominant European actor (Darfur, Middle East peace process), and to blur the lines of decision-making autonomy that divide the two organizations. We need to address these concerns forthrightly in any side discussions we hold with EU leaders here or in London at the G-8 meetings. The EU should not be allowed to dictate how we deal with Europe, and a strategy of engaging simultaneously through the EU, through NATO, and bilaterally remains our best approach. At the same time, the EU is not going to give up on its lead role in a political dialogue with the US on issues where it is already fully engaged, be it Iran, the peace process, or stability in Africa.

SCHNABEL

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